NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL on Caribbean Basin 10 February 1982

of well

The threat to Central America and the Caribbean has many facets. I will start with Cuba. For a nation of 10 million people, Cuba has displayed a remarkable reach on a worldwide scale. It has 70,000 military and civilian advisors abroad in almost 30 countries. Of these, more than half are military. Over 40,000 are in Africa, and some 7,000 in the Middle East. There are 12,000 Cuban technical trainees working in Czechoslovakia and East Germany, and 5-6,000 studying in the Soviet Union.

How did this phenomenon develop? Part of it springs from the demographics—the same source—a combination of overpopulation and youth unemployment. Since 1980, there has been a surge in the 15-19 year old age group of 50 percent. Castro has admitted that tens of thousands of youths are out of work. Recently, he said in a speech that he would like to send 10,000 Cuban youths to Siberia to cut timber for Cuban construction projects. They have lots of young men to train and send into other countries—and that's the way to get preferment in government employment in Castro's Cuba.

The other source of Cuba's aggression is Soviet influence and support.

The Soviets sell their weapons. Arms sales earn about 20 percent of their hard currency. Last year they gave a billion dollars worth of weapons to Cuba--66,000 tons of equipment, compared with the previous ten-year annual average of 15,000 tons. The new stuff includes 34 MIG-21s and -23s, SA-6s, T-62 tanks, MI-24 helicopters, mine sweepers, and guided missile attack boats.

Today Cuba sits astride the Caribbean with a modernized army of \$50,000 troops, reserves of 100,000 and 200 Soviet MIGs.

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In addition to free military equipment, the Soviet Union gives Cuba \$8 million a day, or \$3 billion a year, to keep its economy going. The Russians buy sugar at a premium and sell oil at a discount. There is no way that Cuba could play the role it does in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East without this cash and military support from the Soviet Union.

The Soviets do not extend that kind of support without getting something back that is valuable to them. If the Soviets are to be credited as rational, Cuba's activity as a base and a wedge on our door step has great value to Soviet interests and aspirations.

After trying to export revolution unsuccessfully for over a decade, Cuba scored its first big successes in Angola and Ethiopia, and then just two and a half years ago its most important success in Nicaragua.

There is every indication that Nicaragua is being built up to a superpower on the Central America scale. With a population of about 2 1/2 million, its army of 20,000 active duty troops plus a militia reserve force of an additional 20,000 with 25 T-55 tanks and an expected arrival in coming months of MIG aircraft will achieve military domination over neighboring Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Costa Rica with a combined population seven times theirs. With the help of 1,800 Cuban military and security advisors, 50 Soviets, smaller numbers of East Germans and Bulgarians, Vietnamese, North Koreans, and radical Arabs gathered in Managua, the insurgency in El Salvador is being directed, trained and supplied. Under Cuban and East German guidance, the Sandinista junta is imposing a totalitarian control with a block system of population control on the Cuban model, repression of newspapers, opposition politicians, labor unions, and other private sector leaders.

The repression has created a significant anti-Sandinista movement. The Argentine and Honduran governments are training about 1,000 men in four camps in Honduras. In Caracas, an organization protesting a Cuban takeover in Honduras has been formed with members in Colombia and Mexico as well as Nicaragua and other Central American countries. It's holding a symposium in Caracas on February 22 to offset a Socialist international meeting which will probably support the El Salvador insurgents in Caracas two days later. The reaction of the Sandinistas is to clamp down harder, particularly in the remote eastern part of the country where villages of 100,000 Miskito Indians living there have been attacked by raids from the air. A lot of Indians have been killed and some 5,000 have fled to Honduras where some are being trained for resistance activities.

The conflict in El Salvador pits 5,000 full-time guerrillas and 5,000 support militia against a government army of 16,000 and a national guard, border guards and police aggregating about 9,000 men. Put these uniformed forces together and you have a force with a superiority of 3 or 4 to 1, counting some of the part-time guerrillas. The rule of thumb is that a margin of between 8 and 10 to 1 is needed to defeat a well armed insurgency. The insurgents are being supplied with arms by air, by sea and by land through Honduras from Nicaragua. They are being directed by experienced Cubans and Nicaraguans over a sophisticated communications net located in Nicaragua. The conflict has been stalemated for over a year. Government forces can make large sweeps, and after they return to their bases the guerrillas regain control of many roads, villages and large segments of the countryside. They are now attacking provincial towns and economic targets to intimidate voters from going to the polls in the March election and to depress the economy. As long as the insurgents are able

to attack economic targets, any possible level of economic assistance will not keep up with the economic loss the insurgents can inflict. In an insurgency conflict, unless the government wins it ultimately loses, and that is a prospect for El Salvador as long as the insurgency can be supplied and trained from outside the country.

To achieve a military victory, the government would have to double its forces. Even though there is no trouble recruiting soldiers in El Salvador, there is little insurance as to how long it would take to build the government forces up sufficiently to give them an advantage as long as additional trained guerrillas and the continued flow flow of arms can be provided from Nicaragua. In addition, the direction of the combat from a central command headquarters through a sophisticated communications system that reaches all the guerrilla factions and units in Nicaragua gives the guerrillas an increasingly valuable advantage over the unsophisticated El Salvador military command. While this is being done, the dynamism of subversion from Cuba and Nicaragua is being extended to Guatemala and Honduras to make it even more difficult to turn the tide.

The insurgency has spread to Guatemala where during this year the number of insurgents more than doubled to 4,500 and trained leaders and arms came in from Cuba and Nicaragua. The Guatemalan government is under heavy pressure and if El Salvador falls there is little chance that Guatemala can survive.

The Honduran government is helping El Salvador by trying to reduce the flow of arms by road and sea from Nicaragua through Honduras into El Salvador. There is no active insurgency in Honduras, but about 100 guerrillas have been trained in Cuba.

To evaluate what is happening here it is important to know that there has been a consistent pattern in developing these insurgencies. Before getting started in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, leaders of some 4 or 5 leading leftist factions were brought to Havana and promised support in money, arms and training if they would unify. The resulting cohesion has made the ensuing insurgency more effective. Thus far the Cubans and Nicaraguans have seen their efforts succeed and there have been no indications of a readiness to pull back and negotiate away this success, particularly in El Salvador.

There has been a growing concern on the part of other Latin American countries. Fifteen of them spoke out against the declaration of support for the El Salvador insurgency promulgated by Mexico and France. OAS, by a vote of 22 to 3, supported the elections in El Salvador with only Nicaragua, Mexico and Grenada voting against. This last month Costa Rica, Honduras and El Salvador joined in requesting protection from the United States, Venezuela and Colombia against the threat they perceived in the growing militarization of Nicaragua.

A National Intelligence Estimate made in September concluded that a continuation of the present trends could result in victory for the extreme left in El Salvador, and such a victory would heighten prospects for the revolutionaries in Guatemala. Today the outlook is even more alarming.

When Nicaragua receives Soviet MIGs it can threaten the Panama Canal.

Tanks can roll into Honduras and also through Costa Rica to the borders of Panama. In short, Nicaragua will be able to intimidate its neighbors by military force. We see Cuba active training or planting guerrillas in virtually every Latin American country, 600 of them in Colombia. Looking beyond that, a Cuba and a communist Central America organized on the Cuban style with a high level of militarization could constitute a formidable armed force in

Central America that could threaten the Panama Canal and the sea lanes of the Caribbean. An NIE of September 1981 concurred in by the entire Intelligence Community pointed out that success of the Central American subversion "would bring the revolution to the Mexican border, thereby raising the risks of the internal destabilization."

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No loss for Soviet - let situation continue - portray as impotent - move hard.

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U.S. Strategy

ENDERS

1. There are three requirements for an effective strategy:

Draft Talking Points:

- -- must deal with the situation on the ground in El Salvador, with Nicaragua as a platform for destabilizing the area, and with Cuba as the source of the trouble;
- -- must maintain majority support in the U.S. public and Congress;
- -- must mobilize as much support in the region as possible.

The three are interrelated: the more company we have in the region, the more support we'll get at home. The more effective our action is on the ground, the more likely Congress and the public will be to suspend judgment.

2. In U.S. public and Congressional opinion there is a broad but still unmobilized majority that doesn't

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want to see the communists win in Central America, an overlapping (and aroused) majority that recoils against the violence, and a hostile minority composed of the old Vietnam network plus many church groups.

- 3. In the region there are many countries -- with Venezuela and Colombia the most important -- that fear a communist victory and want to act to prevent it. Little by little they are coming out in the open. But they are still not sure the U.S. has the will and staying power to win Mexico which talks left abroad and rules right at home, is unlikely to change course, although de la Madrid will probably take fewer foreign initiatives than Lopez Portillo. The gathering economic crisis will inhibit Mexican activism.
- 4. The strategy that has emerged from many NSC discussions and the two NSDD's responds to these requirements.

 It has six elements.
 - That means training and equiping a substantially larger army that will gain the military advantage.

 But it also means increased economic aid. The

-3-

insurgents' attack against the economy will discredit the government unless we offset the costs.

- -- Second, we have to press on with the reforms in El Salvador -- elections, land reform, human rights. This is the way ultimately to defeat the insurgents (they marginalize themselves by not participating in the process). It also is the only way to maintain U.S. Congressional and public support or tolerance.
- Third, we must take the war to Nicaragua. They are vulnerable, as the Miskito Indian and various high level defections indicate. We doubt we can overthrow the government. But we can disrupt support to El Salvador, and up the cost to the Cubans and Soviets.
- Fourth, we must isolate Nicaragua, preparing a coalition of countries to support us and possibly act with us should the Soviets and Cubans move fast to arm Nicaragua. That is the purpose of the CADC, including Nicaragua's neighbors, with support from Venezuela, Colombia and us. It

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is now a political and economic grouping. More heavy arms flowing into Nicaragua would transform it into a military grouping.

- rifth, we must lay the basis for future prosperity in the area through the CBI. The program, which is an innovative blend of government action and private enterprise, is intended to preempt new insurrections in the area, broaden support at home, and provide a vehicle for cooperation (if not cooptation) of such regional powers as Canada, Mexico, Venezuela. Colombia may now join.
- -- Sixth, we must build pressure on Cuba. Radio
 Marti (which at last is moving), preparation
 to defend against a new Mariel, tightening the
 embargo, squeezing Cuban staffs at the UN and
 in Washington, and the use of military exercises
 and simulations are all elements here.
- 5. That is where we are at the moment. Two remarks.
- -- <u>First</u>, this is still, most of us who have been working on it believe, an <u>incomplete</u> strategy.

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We have yet to find the way to deal effectively with Cuba. You authorized contingency planning for petroleum quarantine/embargo/air strikes against Cuba, along with similar actions against Nicaragua. The planning has been done. But central questions remain: could the U.S. stand up to a long crisis? Could Castro claim victory merely by surviving? Could the tentacles (Cuban activities in Africa and Central America) survive even if the head were struck? What we need is the right political concept. If Poland were invaded we could "take Cuba hostage" (for example by a petroleum quarantine) and hold it at low levels of economic performance for as long as the Soviets stayed in Poland. The U.S. public would probably support us in that case. We are looking for other concepts. Once we find a way to bring a credible threat against Cuba -- one we would be prepared to carry out -- we can construct a bargaining scenario that offers Castro an alternative.

-- Second, this is an interrelated strategy. It won't do us much good to squeeze Nicaragua or

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hassle Cuba if we lose on the ground in El Salvador. But in order to hold there, we need emergency economic as well as military assistance. The economic aid is part of the CBI, still to be announced. To those such as myself who have been spending a lot of time on the Hill lately, it will not be possible to get Congressional consent to the CBI in this year of recession, budget cutting and elections, unless we make the strategic argument vigorously and at very high level.

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(DRAFT DISCUSSION PAPER)

Combined NSC/NSPG

Cuba/Central America: The Next Six Months

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Concept

The President has now approved the major elements of a Caribbean Basin strategy. These include:

- -- Request to Congress for major trade and investment authorities in the Caribbean Basin Initiative to address underlying causes of instability in the region;
- -- Request to Congress for emergency increases in financial assistance (FY 82 supplemental and FY 83 budget increases) to meet the short-term economic crisis in certain key countries (El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Jamaica, etc.);
- -- Increased military assistance to El Salvador and others under active threat (506(a) plus requests for supplemental FY 82 assistance);
- -- Firm stance toward Cuba (tightening of embargo, Radio Marti, military preparedness measures, etc.);

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-- Contingency planning for possible action against Cuba and/or Nicaragua.

There are three problems to overcome if over the next six months we are to integrate these elements into an effective policy.

I. First, how to gain the initiative and get the budgetary and other authorities we need even if the news from El Salvador (military, elections, human rights) continues bad.

To do this, we need actions that

- -- Keep the focus on Cuba and Nicaragua (they may help by arms imports, etc., but we can dramatize their role by a series of moves against them). However, we also should refrain during this period from action forcing statements or actions toward Cuba and Nicaragua to avoid either jeopardizing Congressional approval of the CBI authorities or diverting attention from Soviet actions in Poland.
- -- Remind the U.S. (and Latin) public that we are not alone in our concerns or our actions, especially by continuing to promote the new Central American Democratic Community (CADC);

-- Balance our security focus with economic remedies, both to win friends in the area for a possible Rio Treaty action, and to bring along those in this country who contend Cuba is not really the problem.

The draft scenario given below is intended to meet these requirements.

- II. Second, do we use the expected arrival of MiG's in Nicaragua primarily to rally the area and get our program through Congress -- or do we make it the occasion for a showdown with Nicaragua and possibly Cuba?
- III. Third, should we begin to plan now for direct action against Cuba and Nicaragua once our program is through Congress, anticipating that the actions directed under NSDDs 17 and 21 may not by themselves be adequate to meet the threat to US interests.

These last two questions are addressed after the scenario.

Scenario:

January

- -- Presidential Certification on aid to El Salvador;
- -- \$55 million Section 506(a) action for military assistance to El Salvador;

February

- -- (before the Congressional recess) Presidential speech on the dangers in the Caribbean Basin: announcing CBI; followed up by submission of CBI legislation;
- -- Begin moving Radio Marti authorization through the Congress;*
- -- Introduce FY 83 budget requests for economic and security assistance for the region in the Congress;*
- -- Continue efforts to cause Socialist International to back away from support for Nicaragua;*
- -- Curb activities of the Cuban Mission to the UN;
- -- Initiate economic measures against Cuba (blacklisting ships
 and curtailing tourism);*
- -- Start base access talks with Honduras, Colombia (and possibly Jamaica);
- -- Central American Democratic Community (CADC) continues to build support for Salvadoran elections and calls on Nicaragua not to import further heavy offensive weapons;
- -- Approach Castro to see whether he will address our agenda.

 If he does, we would have exchanges (to last as long as it takes to get program through Congress) to establish what concession (if any) Cuba will grant;
- -- Introduce repeal of Clark Amendment; *
- -- Introduce Caribbean Basin military assistance supplemental;*
- *Action continues through the period of the scenario.

-- Lay down markers with Soviets, Nicaraguans and Cubans on the introduction of MIGs into Nicaragua;

March

- -- Second Foreign Ministers' Meeting on the CBI; bring Colombia in; ask others to put offers on the table;
- -- Salvadoran army offensive to preempt guerrilla efforts to disrupt the election;
- -- (March 15) Radio Marti Commission submits interim report; press for Congressional authorization of \$10 million;
- -- First guerrilla activity in Nicaragua;
- -- Constituent Assembly elections in El Salvador;

April

- -- Formation of transitional government in El Salvador (revamping?);

 Possible opportunity for improvement in international image
 on control of violence, greater civilian influence, etc.
- -- Salvadoran Constituent Assembly invites FMLN/FAR to present their views (this might help with Congressional passage of our legislative program);
- -- Ministerial meeting of the CADC with Venezuela, Colombia and U.S. to assess Central American situation;

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- -- Final Congressional action on CBI and emergency aid authorities;
- -- Peak of military maneuvers and other measures to increase sense of insecurity in Cuba (2-carrier exercise);
- -- Final discussion with Cubans, followed (if discussions are sterile) by closing of the Cuban Interests Section.

When the MiG's come into Nicaragua:

The model introduced will affect to some degree US public and Third Country concerns. For example, MiG 15s or 17s are unlikely to be seen as causing a major shift in the current military balance.

There are three alternative courses of action (not necessarily mutually exclusive).

(A) Move U.S. air units to San Andres and Honduras.

Pro

-- Military response to a military action; helps convince new regional group of need for eventual Rio Treaty action (without forcing the pace unduly); helps get our legislative program through Congress.

Con

- -- Could be taken by Central Americans as indication we won't act with force; may have effect of validating MiG presence.
- (B) If MiGs are delivered by sea, seek to board the ship and seize the MiGs.

Pro:

- -- demonstrates that we are prepared to act forcefully;
- -- prevents arrival of MiGs with minimum risk of casualties.

Con:

- -- Will be difficult to detect shipment in advance and to intercept;
- -- Boarding and seizure of foreign flag ship will be seen as act of war.
- (C) Take out the planes (plus as many tanks and as much FMLN command/control as possible without major civilian casualties) seeking

 CADC blessing and token participation.

Pro:

-- convinces Latin American and Caribbean leadership that we are serious about defending our interests in the area,

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and

-- sends a clear signal to the Cubans and Soviets that we are prepared to respond with violence if they continue to test us in the area (or, implicitly, elsewhere).

Con:

- -- Will have no permanent strategic result;
- -- However impressed in private, most Hemispheric governments would condemn us in public (probably including
 close friends such as Venezuela), while even such supporters
 as Argentina, Chile, Honduras may be reserved in public;
- -- would reunite Nicaragua under the Sandinistas; without

 it, the regime in Managua will be increasingly vulnerable

 to internal challenge;
- -- would re-cement foreign support for the Sandinistas; without it, the European Socialists are pulling back;
- the Congress might well find a way to condition additional military and economic resources for the area on no further military intervention, or at least to delay their passage; El Salvador will go under if there is a significant delay in providing added monies on either the economic or the security side; and
- -- we will have exposed ourselves while Cuba retains its freedom of action.

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(D) Use the MiG's as the occasion to move to a showdown with Nicaragua and Cuba, imposing a full blockada on the former and
a petroleum quarantine on the latter, with the aim of obtaining
removal of the planes, tanks and other offensive weapons plus
Cuban advisors, along with Nicaraguan/Cuban commitments to
stop all export of subversion.

Pro:

- -- would, if successful, inflict a major defeat on Cubans/Soviets, enabling us to straighten out Central America and change the East/West balance;
- -- might attract qualified majority Rio Treaty support (14
 votes);
- -- doesn't include U.S. first use of force but blockade is act of war.

Con:

- -- would involve the Administration in a prolonged crisis, with lowered political and military flexibility;
- -- could lead to US/Soviet clash over a Soviet tanker, or major Soviet countermove in Berlin, Poland, or the Trans-Caucasus;
- could be drawn-out and non-decisive if Cubans decide to wait us out; Castro could try to score a victory merely by showing he could survive;

- -- is (at least as far as advisors and no-interference pledge go) impossible to verify.
- -- adverse impact on our military capabilities in Mediterranean and elsewhere.
- -- Even if we weaken Cuba in a major way, we do not <u>ipso</u>

 facto assure stability in Central America.

IV. If currently planned moves are indeed adequate

- (A) We could prepare to impose the blockade/quarantine once the CBI and other resource bills are passed. Costs and risks are similar to alternative (D) above, except that
 - requests on the Hill (necessary to get a Rio Treaty majority and win the war on the ground in El Salvador);
 - -- we could complete the record building in talks with Cuba;
 - -- coincides with development of covert capability against Nicaragua.
- (B) We could move to take out all Cuban offensive capabilities (air force, naval ships, POL storage, etc.), followed up by blockade/quarantine.

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Pro

- -- Short crisis, demonstrating USSR cannot protect its proxy;
- -- Cubans military/economic power could be kept at a low level indefinitely.

Con

- -- There would be U.S. losses (up to 100 planes);
- -- Castro could claim victory merely by surviving;
- -- African and Central American investments of Cuba would remain; Castro would have nothing to lose;
- -- USSR could retaliate elsewhere.

Outline of Caribbean Basin Speech

Regional Objectives I.

Our overall regional objective is to promote peaceful change, security and stability in the Caribbean Basin and to ensure that external forces hostile to US interests are excluded. Under-development is the long-term problem of the region; subversion is the short-term threat. Both must be addressed in order to meet our objectives.

II. Threats to Regional Stability and Security

Economic underdevelopment and the absence of strong political institutions have created conditions in which externally sponsored subversion and aggression threaten the region. Poverty and political disaffection allow military subversion from the Soviet Union and its clients, Cuba and Nicaragua. The threat is reinforced by the success of the leftist propaganda campaign which has over and over again been telling the "big lie." In the near term, problems of subversion must be met immediately and the seeds for longer-term political and economic development must be sown simultaneously.

III. US Strategy

To respond to these threats, our strategy must proceed ' along three basic lines. The economic and political measures attack the fundamental problem; the security actions attack subversion which threatens the development process.

- A. Acceleration of economic development in friendly states
 - -- The Caribbean Basin Initiative serves this purpose.
- B. Enhancing the evolution of political democracy

Our efforts center on support for free and internationally credible elections in all states, particularly in El Salvador in March. Other measures in this area include:

- -- Radio Marti
- -- Strong support for Central American community
- -- Carrying our message to our friends and Allies

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C. Regional security

In this area our efforts are designed to address the near-term problems first. Measures include specific initiatives designed to strengthen military capabilities of friendly governments in the region and at the same time to provide powerful disincentives for Cuba and Nicaragua to continue to export subversion.

· IV. Implementation

Our objectives in these measures require a phased program of implementation. We will in the course of the next few weeks submit legislation to Congress to help in the areas of economic development and the evolution of political democracy. This approach to fundamental problems in the region should be given center stage in our presentation to Congress and the public. At the same time we will begin a series of increasingly strong measures to ensure that the region is sufficiently secure and stable to allow economic growth and political development.

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(Draft) Cuba/Central America: The Next Six Months

	ITEM (NSDD)	<u>JAN</u>	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	ACTION
1	Presidential Certification	X						State
	506(a) Action (17-3)	x						DOD
	Monitor GRN actions private sector (17-6)	X		~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	State			
	Contingency Plans: Cuba/Nicaragua (17-10)	X						DOD
	Improved Military Preparedness (17-11)	X						DOD
	Haig/Gromyko (21/PE-1)	X						State
	President's Speech-CBI (17-1)		X					WH
	Public/Legislative Task Force (17-1)		X					WH
	Radio Marti action (21/PE-2)		X(interim	report	3/15)-		State
	FY 83 budget economic/security assistance		X					State
	Emergency economic assistance FY 82 (17-2)		X					State
	Discourage SI support to Nicaragua		X					
	Restrict Cuban UN Mission (21/PE-7)		X					State

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	ITEM	<u>JAN</u>	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	ACTION
	Economic measures against Cuba (21/PE-3)		X					State
	Base Access Talks (Honduras, Colombia, Jamaica?) (21/MI-3)		X					State
	Tighten Cuba embargo (17-7)		X					State
1	CADC support ES elections; requests Nicaraqua not import further heavy offensive weapons		X					State
	Approach Castro re our Agenda		, х					State
	Introduce repeal of Clark Amendment (21/PE-5)		X		State			
	Introduce CB mil assistance supplemental		X					DOD
	Lay down markers w/Soviets, Nicaraguans, Cubans on introduction of MiGs into Nicaragua		x					State
	Second FonMin Meeting on CBI; bring Colombia in; ask others put offers on table (21/MI-5)			X				State
	Salvadoran army offensive to preempt guerrilla efforts to disrupt elections			x				State

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ITEM	<u>JAN</u>	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	ACTION
Constituent Assembly elections in El Salvador			x				State
Defense of southeastern U.S. (21/MI-4)			X				DOD
Formation transitional govt in El Salvador				Х			State
Salvadoran Constituent Assembly invites FMLN/FAR to present their views				x		•	State
Ministerial Meeting of CADC w/Venezuela Colombia and US to assess C.A. situation				x			State
Final Congressional action on CBI and emergency aid measures				x	`		State
Peak of military maneuvers/other measures to increase sense of insecurity in Cuba (2-carrier exercise) (21/MI-2)				x			DOD
Final discussion w/Cubans, followed-if discussions sterileby closing of Cuban Interests Section (21/PE-4)				X			State

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